


Bandwagon



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CIRCUS**

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does an aerial double somersault

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

On our cover this issue we honor our "Queen of the Milwaukee Circus Parade". Mamie Ward.

Known to the circus fans of today as the person who designs and makes all of the colorful wardrobe for the annual Schlitz-Circus World Museum parade. Mamie Ward is truly a circus great, one of the finest lady aerialists of all time.

As a member of the famous Flying Wards, she was featured on Sells-Floto and other major circuses forty years ago. The double somersault, advertised on this Sells-Floto lithographs of the early 1920s, was but one of the difficult parts of her performance.

Bandwagon is proud to honor this great lady of the circus by featuring her on our cover. The litho was printed by the National Printing and Engraving Company of Chicago. The costume and title are in red with Mamie Ward's name in blue. The original lithograph is from the Pfening Collection.

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2075

CHS BUTTONS AVAILABLE

A newly designed Circus Historical Society membership button is now available to members. It is 3" in diameter and is red with the CHS name and the two hemisphere bandwagon in black. A clear window in the center allows the member's name and membership number to be typed.

Only 500 of the buttons have been made and they are available on a first-come basis to CHS members only.

The cost is only 50¢ and they are available from Julian Jimenez, CHS Secretary-Treasurer. Send name and membership number when ordering.

SEPT.-OCT. Issue Delay

There may be a slight delay in publication of the September-October issue of the BANDWAGON, as the Editor will be out of the country most of September, among other things attending the Fifth International Congress of Circus Fans in Amsterdam, Holland.

READER'S COMMENTS

In the article on the 1947 Sparks Railroad Circus which appeared in the Jan-Feb and Mar-Apr 1970 Bandwagon it was mentioned that after the show folded Pete Kortess acquired the six flat cars and speculation was made on the final disposition of these cars. Recently CHS Red Sonnenberg talked to Kortess and asked him about this. He said that he sold the flat cars to a salvage firm in Seattle for scrap thus ending speculation that the cars ever saw further service on a show. Kortess also stated that Barney Gerety of the Beckman & Gerety Shows (Carnival) had never been paid for two of the cars which he had sold to Sparks when it was framed and that when he sold them he had to pay Gerety what was due him. Kortess also mentioned another angle concerning the Sparks show's demise which had not come to light before. He said that Johnny Denton of the Denton Shows (Carnival) was anxious to purchase the show from Edgar and in fact had given a \$1,000.00 down payment on it but the court litigation and claims from creditors killed all chances of Denton getting it. Kortess said that Denton came to Renton, Wash. where the Sparks show was tied up and when he found out what the score was he left and just said that "he had shot crap for his grand".

SOUNDS OF THE CIRCUS

A REVIEW

By GENE PLOWDEN

Richard Whitmarsh and his South Shore Concert Band has come up with an excellent collection of circus marches, first volume of "Sounds of the Circus," which we are told will be a complete documentary of circus music.

The band has recorded 16 numbers, three of which have not often been heard in the last half century or so — "Royal Bridesmaids" (Casto), "New Madison Square Garden" (King), and "Invictus" (King).

Nine of the numbers are Karl L. King compositions, and every circus fan has heard and remembers such marches as "Cyrus the Great," "Pondoroso," "Barnum and Bailey's Favorite," "Pageantry," and "Bolivar."

Not so well remembered are "Sells-Floto Triumphant" and "Trouping Days," also by the prolific Mr. King, who led the Barnum & Bailey band before that show was combined with the Ringling Bros. Circus starting with the 1919 season when Merle Evans took over.

The record opens with "Bennett's Triumphant" (Ribble), and also includes the ever-popular "Thunder and Blazes" (Fucik), also known as "Entrance of the Gladiators." Others are "Ringling Bros. Grand Entry" (Sweet), "Burr's Triumphant" and "Olympia Hippodrome," both by Alexander.

Each number comes across like circus music should, with rhythm, volume and style; it's solid. The cornets, clarinets and trombones are clear and strong for good listening. Bases and drums give the music the body it needs, and the timing is good.

"Minor inaccuracies have purposely not been corrected or edited from the original recording to give you all the spontaneity of a live performance," Whitmarsh reports.

This may be true, but they're so minor it takes close listening to catch any flaw at all. The real circus flavor is here for pure enjoyment.

The album, says the announcement by SSCB, is the beginning of a series to encompass not only the circus favorites but authentic circus flavored music never before recorded."

Let us hope it also includes such grand numbers as "March of the Toys," "Circus Echoes," and such Merle Evans favorites as "Fredella" and "Symphonia."

The series is dedicated "to all the great circus bandmaster-composers who have provided an ageless bit of musical happiness for coming generations to enjoy."

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SELLS-FLOTO CIRCUS

ITS BEGINNING IN THE WEST

By Gordon M. Carver

Introduction

The early years of the Sells-Floto Circus have been only sparingly explored. The few references to this outstanding show have to some extent been based on speculation. It is my hope that this monograph will be able to clear up some of these doubts. In doing this I also hope to present a better and somewhat clearer history and picture of the show as it existed up to 1906, the first year it played under the title Sells-Floto Circus.

The Start

While the Otto Floto Dog and Pony Show took to the road in April 1902, the idea and beginning preparation for it started about nine months before, or even possibly earlier than that. To what extent this show was the brainchild of Harry Tammen, part owner of the *Denver Post*, we will never know for a certainty. The first public notice of the activity that eventually led to the start of the show was an advertisement in the August 3, 1901 *New York Clipper* by Harry Tammen of the *Denver Post* for a first class pony trainer. No mention was made of any show possibilities in the advertisement. We therefore can speculate that he, at this point, may have had no more than a vague idea, if even that, of going into show business.

While we may never know what Tammen had in mind at the time of that August 3, 1901 advertisement, it does appear that by November the idea of forming a show had begun to take pretty firm root. In the November 16 and December 7, 1901, issues of the *New York Clipper* D. C. Webber, American Amusement Co., Jacobsen Bldg., Denver,

Colorado, had advertisements asking for "all kinds of circus stuff". Mentioned as being wanted were pull up wagons (?), bandwagons, 60 foot flat cars, a 60 foot baggage car, ticket and tableau wagons and seats nine tiers high. They also wanted trained animals. It is interesting that neither the name of Tammen nor Floto appeared in these advertisements.



Harry H. Tammen is shown in winter quarters with a newly painted cage; Lockhart's elephants name is on the back of the cage. Pfening Collection.

It is also interesting that Harry Tammen in an article, apparently ghost written for him, in the *Billboard* in 1909 gave the following explanation for the start of the

The Otto Floto Shows looked like this on the lot in its first year of 1902. The marquee, and menagerie tents on the left and big top at right. Pfening Collection.

show. While certain of the observations that he makes fit into the other facts that we know, at least as far as the date he mentions is concerned, it would appear that his memory may have served him poorly. In any event he said then, "in 1902 (more probably 1901) it was suggested in a joking way by Otto Floto to Mr. Bonfils and myself that among the many other things that we possessed we should have a dog and pony show. Henry B. Gentry happened to be on a visit, and insisted that the writer should go to Houston, Texas, where his shows were wintering, 'just for fun's sake'. On this visit Gentry started opposition to himself by presenting a trick dog (to me). Around this trick dog which Gentry named Joy, with push and persistence from Otto Floto, The Great Floto Dog and Pony Show was arranged". It is of course possible that all of this happened before any of the advertisements mentioned above appeared.

Another unanswered question is - who was D. C. Webber. It is possible when he first started that he had no connection with Tammen and that they later, at the end of 1901 or very early in 1902, joined forces. Or perhaps Tammen hired him as an experienced circus man to get the show started. In any event when the show finally hit the road the next spring, D. C. Webber was listed as one of the three owners and President and General Manager. However, whatever his interest in the show, his name never appeared on the rosters in any capacity after 1902.

The first indication of the Floto show as such came in 1902 in a brief news item in the March 29 issue of the *New York Clipper* in which it was stated that Dan Castello was training 86 head of ponies for the Otto Floto Dog and Pony Show. As is generally known Otto Floto was the Sports Editor of the *Denver Post* and it has been said that his name appealed to Tammen as being unique, euphonious and circusy in appearance and sound and that he wanted to use his name for the show. To get the use of it he gave Floto one share of stock. Whether this is true or not Floto did serve in a number of capacities on the show during its early years, his first





This fancy dog float was pulled by ponies in the parade in 1902. Two lithographs advertising the show are in the store window in background. Pfening Collection.

job being that of Manager of the advance car in 1902.

The First Season - 1902

The Otto Floto Dog and Pony Show opened its first season and started on its way to eminence in the outdoor show world on April 10, not in its home town Denver, but in Trinidad, Colorado. The owners were listed as D. C. Webber, President and General Manager, as previously noted, Harry H. Tammen, Secretary-Treasurer, and Frederick G. Bonfils. Bonfils apparently held no office and, in fact, was a reluctant investor. As Tammen's partner in the *Denver Post*, he had gone along with the express understanding that he would remain in only if the show was immediately successful and profitable. The fact that in 1920 he was still a partner with Tammen when the show was sold to the American Circus Corporation should eliminate any doubts as to its success as an American amusement enterprise.

The show this first season was just a small dog and pony outfit. According to the *New York Clipper*, there was an advance car, three Pullmans and two 65 foot flats. No mention is made of stock cars but Harry Tammen in 1909 stated that there were eight cars that first year. He also said that all stock was carried in Pullman style cars. So we should probably add two Pullman stock cars to the above to carry the "eight dapple gray baggage horses weighing 1700 pounds each, 63 ponies and Lockhart's Elephants (4?)" that the *New York Clipper* also mentioned as being with the show.

Lockhart's Elephants, a famous English performing group, did not last out the season. On May 26, the first day of a six day stand in Denver, they apparently were still with the show. A picture appearing in the *Denver Post* on that date showing the parade about to leave the lot includes four elephants. While the picture does not identify them as the Lockhart Elephants it would be illogical to assume that in only six weeks since the show opened,

they had left and been replaced. However, they did not last long on the show after this date for in the *New York Clipper* of June 7 there was a notice stating that Lockhart's Elephants were appearing in St. Joseph, Missouri. The show was at this time still in Colorado so it is obvious that they had left.

The show was not long without elephants for by early July, at least, the Lockhart Elephants had been replaced. By how many we cannot be sure. Fred Alispaw, in the *White Tops*, indicated that the Floto show obtained six elephants in 1902 including the famous Snyder from the Hagenbeck firm in Hamburg, Germany. But in the *New York Clipper* of July 19 there appeared an advertisement by the Floto show for a reliable man to train seven elephants. (They also wanted to buy two camels and a steam piano - already they were enlarging). So, while there may be various contentions made by various persons connected with the show at that time or later as to when the elephant Snyder joined the show, when the other Hagenbeck elephants joined and how many there were, I am inclined to accept the above mentioned advertisement as the mostly likely to be accurate. Thus it would appear that by mid-season the show had seven elephants one of which was Snyder.

The *Denver Post* photo referred to above, while a rather poor, unreproducible picture, fairly typical of news photos of that time, does show what appears to be a shell bandwagon with a six horse hitch and a small ticket wagon. Some six other wagons, all small, also are in evidence. The background shows some of the tops but it is not possible to identify them. The *New York Clipper* had earlier listed the parade as consisting of sixteen pieces of dog and pony wagons, cages, tableaux and two bandwagons. The big top was a 90 foot round with one 50 foot and two 40 foot middle pieces. The menagerie was a 60 foot round with two 30 foot middle pieces and there was a 60 foot round dressing top. There certainly were other tops but they were not mentioned. Incidentally as we will see, the size of the tops did not increase greatly over the next five years even though the number of cars almost tripled.



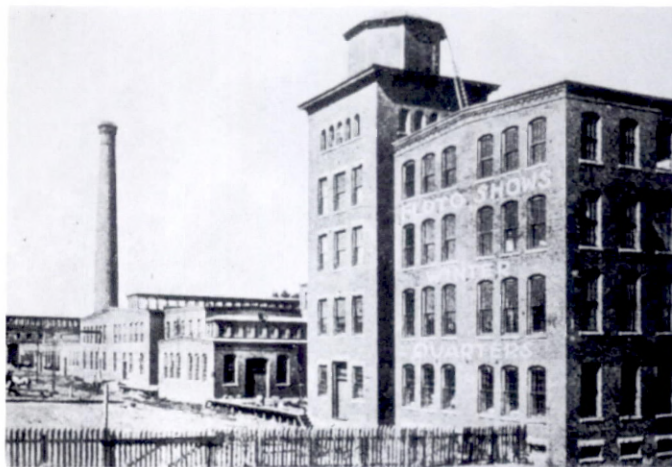
A group of children posed in front of a baggage wagon lettered The Otto Floto Show. Pfening Collection.

Other than the three owners previously mentioned, the *New York Clipper* named only three performers, Dan Castello, pony trainer, W. A. Meehan, dog trainer and Harry Tyler, monkey trainer. That so few performers were listed is not surprising when we know that most of the actors were animals although most certainly there were some other human performers. Other persons of note that were mentioned were Peter Rogers, Boss Canvasman, and E. J. Clifford, Press Agent. Otto Floto as Manager of the advance car had six billers working for him.

The show opened in Trinidad, Colorado, on April 10. While the route data for that first year is skimpy, we do know that it played in Wichita, Kansas April 15-16; Pittsburg, Kansas April 18; Joplin, Missouri April 19; Topeka, Kansas May 5-6; Leavenworth, Kansas May 7; St. Josephs, Missouri May 9-10; Des Moines, Iowa May 12-13; Omaha, Nebraska May 15-17; Council Bluffs, Iowa May 19; Denver, Colorado May 26-31; Greeley, Colorado June 2; Salt Lake City, Utah July 10-11; Rollins, Wyoming July 17; Laramie, Wyoming July 18; Cheyenne, Wyoming July 19; North Platte, Nebraska July 21; Fort Dodge, Iowa July 30; Cedar Rapids Iowa August 7; and Dubuque, Iowa August 11. While we have no other specific route data the show did apparently play in Chicago or its environs in early September. So far as is known they returned to Denver for the winter.

1903 - The Second Season

As the Otto Floto Dog and Pony Show started to prepare for its second season it began to be apparent that, while its name was unchanged, this was to be a year of transition from dog and pony show to full-fledged circus. Early in the year in the January 24 issue of the *New York Clipper* there was an advertisement for "circus features, freaks and clowns". They were also still in the market for elephants and camels as well as other animals. Perhaps as significant as any item was the request for "good four, six and eight horse drivers". This certainly had to indicate a



The winter quarters of the Floto Show were located in this building on the south side of Denver, Colorado. This photo appeared in the 1905 route book published by the show. Pfening Collection.

growth in the number and size of the wagons on the show. Also wanted were three 60 or 65 foot flat cars.

By adding three more flats to the eight cars the show had in 1902 we get 11 cars, but Harry Tammen stated that the show had 12 cars in 1903. With the additional wagons on those extra flats they would have needed more stock which is confirmed by the above ad for them. And so it must be assumed that the twelfth car was a stock, still probably a Pullman-stock conforming to the practice started in 1902. In this same advertisement they offered for sale "fire engines, hose reel, hook and ladder wagons suitable for any first class dog and pony show". Obviously the decision had been made to say "goodbye" to the dog and pony status and move up in the world of outdoor show business to full fledged circus. And as it turned out this was in fact the last year for the "Dog and Pony Show" part of the title.

The staff of the show was quite different from 1902. So far as can be determined there were very few holdovers, except, of course, for Tammen and Bonfils. D. C. Webber, who in 1902 was listed as one of the owners as well as President and General Manager, was gone. In his place as General Manager was Frank Tammen, Harry's brother. Neither was Otto Floto listed as being with it, although he may well have been for he was in later years. It is interesting to speculate as to the reasons for such a complete turnover of staff. Whatever they were failure was not apparently among them for Tammen, himself, in 1909 said of the 1902 season, "it was moderately successful".

The roster of the principal executives and bosses show as already indicated, Frank Tammen as General Manager. However in the April 25 *Billboard* Frank Robertson was referred to as the Manager. Three others who were with the show were Joseph H. Huston, General Agent,

Robert Zierke, the Music Director, and H. Segardahl, Superintendent of both ring and draft stock. C. Bell was the Lot Superintendent with B. M. Smith assisting him as Superintendent of Canvas. The performance was handled by D. H. Markle, Equestrian Director and the menagerie was under the direction of Charles Sanders. Julian Parrish handled the train as Master of Transportation. The side show was under the management of I. C. Shipley and H. Franklin was Manager of Privileges.

Very little appeared in the show journals about this 1903 still small, largely unknown and distinctly western show. All we know is that in Harry Tammen's words it was still "a sort of semi-circus and trained animal show combined". Even its route was reported only spasmodically. There is one interesting sidelight, however, about the origins of the show. There has been some speculation that Tammen was willed the equipment of Busby's Dog and Pony Show on the death of Mr. Busby because of help that Tammen had earlier given him and that this was how Tammen had started his show. This speculation it would seem can be put to rest for in the June 6, 1903 issue of the

The No. 2 advance car is shown in this photo reproduced from the 1905 route book. Pfening Collection.



The April 21, 1905 stand of the show was Oxnard, California. This enormous stand of paper heralded the show's arrival. Nearly every style of paper used here is of a special design for the show. Pfening Collection.

Billboard there is a small news item covering the operations that season of the Busby Bros. Circus.

How little the show was still known may in some measure be indicated by the fact that the *Billboard* in early May quoted Mr. "Taman" (note the spelling) as saying in Houston, Texas, that during the first twenty-five days out the show had been making money. Although Harry Tammen and his show had not yet made enough of an impression in show business circles to have his name spelled correctly, his show was apparently making a favorable impression on the public. However by August the *Billboard* did not again make this mistake, when they made the cryptic, in light of the previous comment, remark that "Harry Tammen is beginning to take a personal interest in the Floto Shows and already business is beginning to improve".

The 1903 season of the Otto Floto Dog and Pony Show had its start, we believe, at Fort Smith, Arkansas on March 26. From there it quickly went into Texas where it apparently stayed all of April.





The overall lot of the 22 car Great Floto Show is pictured in Wallace, Idaho, on June 3, 1905. Pfening Collection.

We have only a few dates, however, those being Clarksville March 31, Longview April 6, Marshall April 6 (?), Houston April 15, Waxahachie April 21, Dallas April 22-23 and Gainesville April 30. From then until early July we have been able to find only five dates. On May 11 they were in Oklahoma City, in LaMar, Missouri May 19 and Iola, Kansas May 25. They played a two day stand June 9-10 in Council Bluffs, Iowa and then evidently turned west for on June 22 they were in Greeley, Colorado. July 2-3 saw another two day stand in Colorado Springs followed by six days in Denver, July 4-9. Since this was their home town, although they had not yet actually established Denver as their winterquarters, they most certainly had the full support of the *Denver Post*. In any event the *Billboard* reported that they had a big week there, this in spite of the fact that Campbell Bros. Circus and the Great London Show had both played there earlier, while Sells & Downs preceded them only by a week and with both Ringling Bros. Circus and the Forepaugh-Sells outfit coming soon. That was formidable opposition for a little 12 car show to play against and apparently win.

Soon after that they again turned eastward for by July 22 we find them in Great Bend, Kansas. While we still have only scattered dates for the next two months through September 14, they are all in Illinois and Indiana. On July 29 they were in Pekin, Illinois followed by Peoria on 30-31. The August dates were Bloomington, Illinois 1, Hoopeston 3, Lafayette 4, and then into Indiana at Frankfort 5, Noblesville 6, Kokomo 7 and Elwood 8. On August 25 they were in Harford, Indiana, and in September at Decatur, Illinois 3, Mattoon 4 and Newton 5. They then went back into Indiana at Linton 7, Sullivan 8, Terre Haute 9, Clinton 10,

The 1905 herald of the Great Floto Show was printed by Smith-Brooks Printing Co., of Denver, but was designed by the U.S. Lithograph Co. Pfening Collection.

COMING - AMERICA'S GREAT TENTED EXHIBITION - COMING

THE GREAT FLOTO SHOWS

THE CIRCUS BEAUTIFUL

MYSTERIOUS INDIA

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AMERICA'S GREATEST TENTED EXHIBITION
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THE GIANT TENTED CITIES AND THE INDY CITY THE SHOW WORLD

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Brazil 11, Clay Center 12 and Evansville 14. Somewhere along in this period they seemed to have acquired a new attraction, "Kiro, a man eating baboon", looping the loop, which the *Billboard*, in one of its rare notices of the Floto Show, said was "making quite a hit everywhere".

In ten days the show was in Texas at Dennison September 25. Only two other dates are available, Franklin, Louisiana, November 6 and the closing date November 21 at Fort Worth. The show wintered in Dallas. This was the first of several winters in its early years that it spent away from Denver.

Season of 1904

If data for 1903 is skimpy that on 1904 is even less available. No detailed reviews of the show appeared and we have only brief news items to go on. One thing we do know is that for this season, one of continued growth, the show was traveling on 18 cars, although we have to wait until 1909 to get this bit of data from the article by Tammen in the *Billboard* previously referred to. To fill these extra cars a 1903 March issue of the *Billboard* stated that Sullivan and Eagle, the wagon builders in Pery, Indiana, "will ship March 5 to the Floto show at Dallas, Texas, a new ticket wagon, chandelier wagon and two baggage wagons". They had previously shipped two carloads, probably system flats, of cages to the Dallas winter-quarters.

For the first time we get some idea of who the performers were. While Robert Zierke was replaced as Bandmaster by Prof. Thacker, he was to return in 1905. The others in the performance were the well known St. Leon Family of five, acrobats, and a bicyclist known as Alixius or the Great Alexus. Under the billing of "The Great Alexus" he did a loop the loop act with a wagon wheel. As Alixius he did a unicycle act. They also advertised "Diavolo" who looped the loop on a bicycle. The Sugimoto troupe of Japs did standard Japanese type of juggling and risley acts. John Carroll had a twelve horse "Ben Hur" liberty act as well as being the trainer of the high school horses. Prof. D. H. Markle filled out his duties as Equestrian Director by training



Half of the big show band rode in this shell bandwagon in the parade in 1905. Lucia Zora Photo from Pfening Collection.

and working both dogs and ponies. As a dog trainer he used the thinly disguised name of D'Marke.

Also, there was "La Belle Leona" who was advertised as "a fairy-like queen of the arena, the only living lady somersault rider". No other identification of her is known. The elephants were trained by and under the guidance of Herr Litzen, another unknown name. While they had the usual elephant acts, much was made of the performance of a mother and baby, Mama Mary and Baby Frieda. The "Spec" was advertised widely for its international flavor and its beautiful costumes of Japan, India, all of Asia, Scotland, Ireland and America. Two side show attractions received much advance notice although the impression given was that they were a part of the big show. They were Black Belle, the smallest living horse and Mlle. Vallecita, beautiful jungle queen, "who caesses savage beasts and makes them quiet at her command".

A feature of the Floto parades were the various small carts pulled by unusual animals. A sacred ox pulls this one. Lucia Zora Photo.



The rest of the big show band made parade riding this fine highly carved tableau wagon. Lucia Zora Photo.

then west again into Oregon and Washington. It was at Walla Walla July 22 and at Portland July 26. We have no more data from then until mid-September when it turned up in Illinois at Keithsburg on the 14th, followed by Abingdon, Peoria and Hoopeston. Thereafter, it quickly moved through Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma. On October 3 it arrived in Paris, Texas, followed by Clarksville, Atlanta and Jefferson with the week ending in Shreveport and Natchitoches, Louisiana. That ends the available routes. This winter it returned to its home base in Denver.

Season of 1905

Again over the winter, the show was growing as it would continue to do for some years. For 1905 the Great Floto Shows was to travel on 22 cars - two in advance and 20 back. A very beautiful and complete route book was published at the end of the season so that for the first time we have a quite complete picture of

A llama pulled this little cart in the parade, carrying two people. Lucia Zora Photo.





Four spotted horses pulled this roman warrior in his chariot in the parade in 1905. Lucia Zora Photo.

the show. Again the show opened Texas, this time in Fort Worth, Wednesday and Thursday March 22 and 23, after an 803 mile run on the Colorado & Southern and the Denver and Fort Worth railroads. Dallas, Waco, Galveston and Houston followed. From that point the show moved rapidly west.

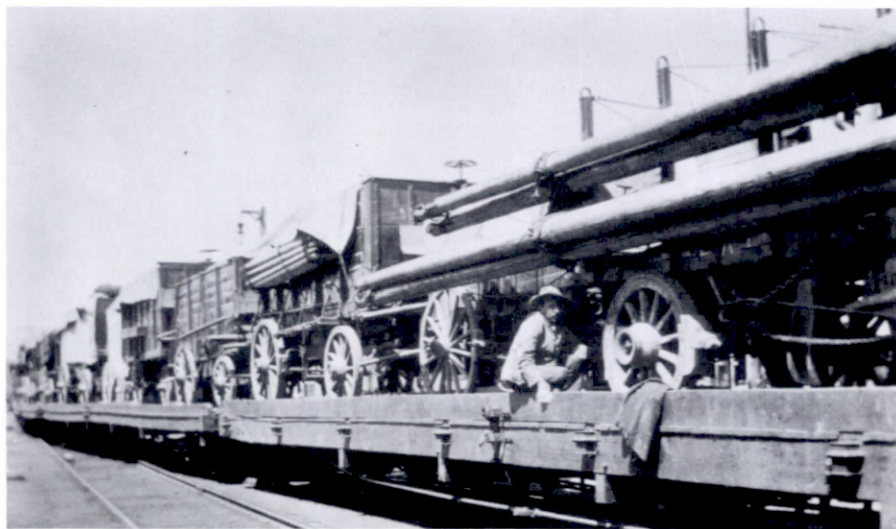
A long and rather unique parade was a feature of the show this year. There were some thirty units in it, although only seven of them were cages. There were five musical features including, the last unit, "German orchestral caliope played by Prof. Jewell", and pulled by six horses. This certainly was an unusual way to describe the traditional steam piano. Incidentally Prof. Jewel was the famous composer of band and circus music, Fred Jewel, who also played baritone in the band. The parade line up is as follows:

- Otto Floto driving Pasha, \$9000 Arabian stallion.
- Bugle corps
- Two mounted knights
- Ben Hur Arabian stallions & giant royal chariot
- Band chariot with Prof. Zierke & 16 musicians
- Queen Anne tableau cage with Bengal tigers
- Carved Roman open lion den
- Mrs. Carroll & Mrs. Rooney on Kentucky saddle horses
- Grecian four horse open cage
- Hussar quartet
- Big band chariot drawn by eight mustangs
- Royal India cage with 57 Varieties of monkeys
- Neptune chariot with Continental Drum Corps
- Mexican vaqueros
- Tableau band car drawn by eight horses
- Miniature happy family van drawn by four camels
- Oriental tab car drawn by brahma bull
- Children's menagerie cage drawn by eight ponies

- Italian veranda cage of llamas
- Royal Indian zebu carts (3)
- Oriental band drawn by shetland pony team
- Eight of the Sultan's favorite riding camels
- Herd of Asiatic camels
- Children's annex, mammoth Australian den of kangaroos drawn by eight ponies
- Queen of the parade in embossed solid solid copper howdah from Bombay, India, on elephant, Mama Mary
- Trilby, clown elephant
- Open leopard cage mounted on the back of the elephant Frieda with the rest of the elephants following
- Patrol wagon and clowns
- Comedy bicycle riders
- German orchestral caliope played by Prof. Jewel, drawn by six horses

For a 22 car show there was, while not large, a substantial spread of canvas. Although no tent sizes are given, from photos that are available it would appear that the big top was about a 130 foot (or

This group of wooden flat cars show the big top pole wagon as well as a number of baggage wagons, on the 1905 train. Lucia Zora Photo.



The side show bally stand and front door are pictured here. It is interesting to note than the show's title does not appear on the banners. Lucia Zora Photo.

a little less) round top with three forty foot middle pieces with only one row of quarter poles. The menagerie looks to be about an 80 foot round top with two thirty foot middle pieces, while the side show was probably a sixty foot round with one thirty foot middle. There were eight double-docked banners for the side show plus an entrance banner. The dressing top was a small round end top with one twenty or thirty foot middle. There is no record of the other tops. A rather novel feature to the show's canvas was the main entrance banner to the side show managed by Arthur Hill. It was more than the usual wordy advertisement for the entertainment to be found within. Actually it was, in double width, a banner depicting the subjugation of lions and tigers by Vallecitas. This act received heavy advance billing, but was not part of the main show. The rest of the side show consisted of the usual novelty acts including John Zubolakis, a well known clay modeler. Also the magician and inside lecturer, Al Windecker, who has



and 18th and the next day at Santa Barbara. On the 24th they were at Bakersfield and the 27th at Fresno. May 1 saw them in Oakland, the 3rd in Berkley and the 10th in Sacramento. They did not play in San Francisco. They entered Nevada at Reno on the 19th and played their first of only two Sunday dates the 21st at Lovelock. On May 25 they left Nevada and played Salt Lake City, Utah. After the next day at Ogden, they moved into the northwest playing Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana and Wyoming starting at Pocatello, May 27 and followed by Boise 29, Baker City 30, Spokane June 2, Butte the 6th and Laramie and Cheyenne on the 14th and 15th.

Entry into Colorado was made at Greeley on June 16. A Monday and Tuesday date, June 19 and 20, marked been active in circus side shows down through the years until very recently.

The menagerie contained seven or possibly eight cages with a fairly representative assortment of animals but nothing unusual. From the *Billboard* in January we know that there were ten elephants, six being named Mom, Frieda, Bumps, Snyder, Alice and Trilby. According to a picture there were four small baby elephants in the herd and these may be the four unnamed in the *Billboard*. Also in the menagerie were fourteen camels and three or four miscellaneous asiatic cattle including one zebu. Strangely, in spite of the large number of lead stock there apparently were no zebras. Chris Zeitz was Superintendent of elephants and Fred Alispaw was Superintendent of the menagerie but assisted with the elephants.

In the big top there were two rings and a center stage. Prior to every performance Prof. Robert Zierke and his band of twenty-one pieces gave a concert. The performance, under the direction of Equestrian Director, John Carroll, was heavy on acrobatic turns with relatively little in the way of animal acts. The roster of performers was substantial and the show unquestionably one of considerable

The September 4, 1905 stand for the show was Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. The large poster used here was printed by the Russell-Morgan Lithograph Co., a division of U. S. Lithograph. Lucia Zora Photo.

merit. The three Hocums bareback act was outstanding in its field. It was supported by Lizzie Rooney from the well-known circus family and Lillian LeVan, equestriennes. Contortionists were a strong part of the show, there being four groups, the Sugumati troupe and the 4 Marvellos, each of which also did acrobatic turns, and the Ashton troupe, and Herbert, the Frogman. Other acrobatic acts were presented by the Pachico family, the Alpine family and the Wentworths who did their acrobatics on an English cart. At a time when the bicycle was so popular, it seems a little surprising that there were only two groups who used them, the Heumans and the Campbells and Johnson who did a comedy turn. There were only three aerial groups, the Tybell sisters who later became quite well-known, the Four Arenas and the Elliott troupe. Other acts were Miss Clara Reuel and her horse Ben Hur, Lew Sunlin with performing steers, an unusual novelty, Prof. Nicholai with trained dogs and Varin Turenne axe manipulating. John Carroll, the Equestrian Director, had two liberty horse groups and Chris Zeitz with assistance from Fred Alispaw presented the elephants. Strangely for a show of this size there were only eight clowns.

As previously indicated, the show opened for a two day stand in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 22 and 23 and then moved rapidly through central western Texas into Arizona at Douglas on April 4, followed by Bisbee and Nogales with Hermosillo and Guaymos in Mexico on April 7 and 8. They played one more stand in Arizona at Tuscon on April 10 and entered California April 11 at Yuma. They played in California through May 18 including San Bernardino April 13, Pasadena the 15th, Los Angeles the 17th

the return to the home town, Denver. After twelve more stands in Colorado, including Colorado Springs on 24 and Trinidad for a big July 4th, they entered Kansas at Dodge City on July 10.

For the next four weeks they played back and forth between Kansas and Missouri, the principal towns being Wichita July 12, Topeka 19, Joplin 24, Fort Scott 31, Leavenworth August 3 with this part of the tour ending at Horton, Kansas, August 7. They went into Nebraska the next day at Beatrice followed by Lincoln and Omaha. This short trip through Nebraska ended when they played Des Moines, Iowa on August 11. Another quick trip through Iowa was followed by one stand in South Dakota at Sioux Falls on the 19th and two each in North Dakota and Minnesota. Entry into Canada was made with a two day stand at Winnipeg, August 25 and 26. There followed four weeks in Canada moving west stopping at Saskatoon on September 1, Regina on the 4th, Lethbridge on the 8th, Edmonton and Calgary on the 13th and 15th and ending with Vancouver on the 22d and 23d. They moved into Sedro-Wooley, Washington for their second and last Sunday date, September 24, followed by seven other Washington towns. Thereafter they played the last two weeks of the season moving back and forth between Idaho, Washington and Oregon, stopping at Lewiston, October 3, Pendleton on the 7th and ending the season at Nampa on the 14th.

They had been on the road for 210 days showing in 176 towns and cities of which only five were two day stands. All tolled 356 performances were given. Perhaps most significantly, rain fell on only 16 days of the tour, a truly unusual record. By the time they returned to Denver they had traveled 18,129 miles, a very long tour by any standards, but a successful one. It also was the end of the Great Floto Shows for in 1906 another great name in the outdoor show world was to be added to the title.

Conclusion

How Tammen in his eagerness to enlarge his show to a point where it could be a real competitor of the big ones in the East hired Willie Sells as General Manager, a member of the famous Sells family of circus fame, thus giving him the right to call his show, as he did from 1906 on, Sells-Floto is, of course, another story. How much the Sells name actually helped the show we can never really know. Certainly the show continued to grow and be highly successful. It did invade the East and compete with the big ones with considerable success. In fact in 1928 it is said that it out-earned Ringling Bros - Barnum & Bailey by a wide margin. But by then Tammen was no longer on the scene. The Great Floto Shows and later the Sells-Floto Circus was on the road for 31 years, with so far as we know, never a losing season, except for its last year - a very unusual record.

BUCK JONES WILD WEST SHOWS AND ROUND UP DAYS

Part II, The Events at Danville, Ill. and final days of the show.

By Joseph T. Bradbury

Foreword

The reader is reminded that in Part I printed in the Mar-Apr 1972 Bandwagon mention was made of the major article on the Buck Jones Wild West which appeared in the Nov-Dec 1965 issue and that information contained in the original article would not be repeated. Those interested may obtain back copies from the editor. CHS Joe Rettinger with the help of Merl "Jack" Wayne who was sheriff 12 years in Danville, Ill. should be credited with the major portion of the research. The complete newspaper files were thoroughly researched and this plus the testimony of those who were with the show at the time, Mrs. Dell Jones, Mrs. Maxine Jones Firfires, Gordon Jones, and Montie Montana. We have a fairly complete account of the events that took place in Danville and the final days of the Buck Jones show. Unfortunately additional photos of the show's physical equipment did not turn up as expected but hopefully they may at some later date at which time they will be published in The Bandwagon.

The kids in Danville, Ill. had a great treat in store for them in July 1929. Huge daubs of colorful billing paper posted on the barns, buildings, and back fences of the area and the pulse tingling posters hung in local merchant's show windows announced that the city would be host to the two top movie cowboy stars of the day both appearing as the feature attraction of traveling undercanvas shows. The Buck Jones Wild West Show was scheduled to play Danville on July 12 while on July 30 the Sells-Floto Circus with Tom Mix Himself would set up its tents in that city.

The Danville newspapers have revealed some rare press material of the Buck Jones show and two such stories are printed here in their entirety to give the reader an example of what the press boys turned out in those days.

The Danville, Ill. Commercial-News, July 11, 1929

"WILD WEST SHOW IN CITY FRIDAY"
Buck Jones Coming With Hundreds of Indians, Cowboys and Movie Players.

He's coming Friday — the star of westerns, the idol of motion picture fans who like their heroes astride plunging bronchos. He is Buck Jones and with him comes his own wild west show that is

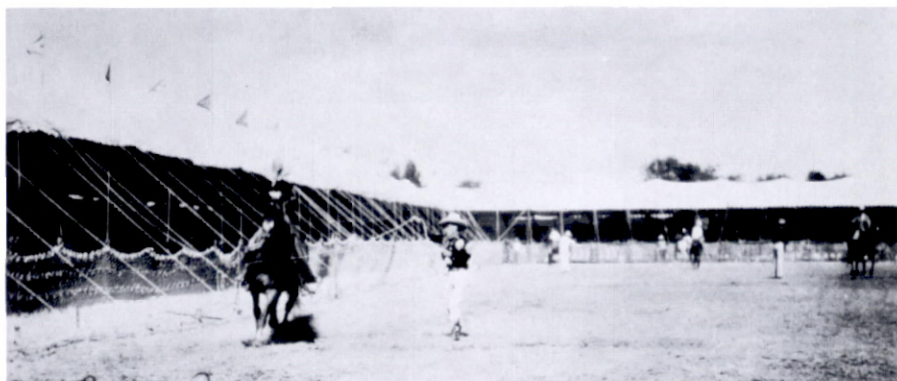


Photo No. 10 - Montie Mickel (Montana), trick and fancy roper performing during opening performance of the Buck Jones Wild West Show at North Hollywood, Calif. May 12, 1929. Montie Montana Collection.

different, with three hundred Indians, cowboys, cowgirls, Mexicans, Arabs, Gauchos, Vequeros, Cossacks, and a battalion of movie players of note.

"It is the Buck Jones Wild West Show, newly organized, but equipped in a manner that makes other circuses envious — an all-steel train over twenty-five cars (actually 15), a magnificent spread of canvas, a huge arena big top and a lighting system just like Buck has used for night pictures in Hollywood.

"All of the wild west features are carried in this big show which comes to Danville for two performances only, afternoon and night, Friday, July 12. Then in addition there are many interesting novelties, among them displays in which Buck Jones, playing leads, shows just how his biggest motion picture successes were made. Every thriller seen in these most exciting "westerns" will be enacted by flesh and blood cowboys, Indians, cowgirls, Mexicans, Arabs, Gauchos, Vaqueros, Cossacks and his movie trained horses, steers, and buffalo.

"The Buck Jones Wild West carries all the big circus features but the side show exhibits and the motion pictures menagerie, the most interesting exhibit ever to tour the country, will be seen under the big top, so that one ticket admits to all.

"The performance is one of great speed, and every lighting effect known to the motion picture studios will be used. Two plants are carried for this purpose.

"Buck Jones, himself appears in almost every big show feature, outshining the cowboy and Indian rough riders and daredevils. He will positively appear at every performance."

The July 12, 1969 edition (show day) carried this article.

"BUCK JONES ARRIVES IN CITY"

"He's here today — the star of all western life and the idol of motion picture fans who appreciate real heroes on the screen. He is Buck Jones, the greatest exponent of real cowboy life, and with him comes his own wild west and round-up days company. Buck has a show that is entirely different than the ordinary wild west and it is without doubt the cleanest, most attractive and high class show of that type that has ever been brought before the public.

With him are cowboys, cowgirls, Mexicans, Arabs, Gauchos and Acqueros. Everything that goes to make up a real wild west show is presented in true western style, from the tribal dances of the Sioux Indians to the attack on the stage coach. The Indians are genuine Sioux from the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota, and one of the few tribes that adhere to the primitive style of living in Indian life. They are what is known as blanket Indians, as they still wear the costumes of years ago, never having adopted the modern style of dress as has other tribes. A group of cowboys expert in the art of fancy roping have added a novelty that never fails to meet with applause. Buck Jones himself appears all through the program in different features and is always seen on one of his horses, so well known to picture lovers, Silver, Clown, and others. There will be two performances, given at 2 O'clock in the afternoon and 8 O'clock at night at which Buck Jones himself will positively appear."

The Buck Jones show moved into Danville on Friday, July 12, 1929 with little thought that it would turn out to be the last stand ever played by the show. As far as the performers and most of the staff knew the show would move on the next day to Crawfordsville, Ind. and

complete the first two weeks after its reorganization in Kansas City.

While the show was setup on the fairgrounds lot in Danville DeWitt Pilchard, who had made a loan of \$15,000 June 17 to prevent the show from being stranded, went into court and secured a temporary injunction to prevent it from moving out of Danville. Although the note was not due until August 1 Pilchard claimed that other provisions of the loan were not being fulfilled. He had sent his representative, L. L. McBroom, to join the show when it temporarily closed at Glenwood Springs, Colo. on June 17, and remained with it after its reorganization and subsequent reopening on July 1. According to Pilchard Mr. McBroom was to handle certain duties pertaining to the selling of tickets and financial accounting and when he was not permitted to do this by the Jones management Pilchard took the matter to court.

The July 13, 1929 issue of the Danville Commercial-News told the story of these developments as follows.

"CIRCUS OUTFIT STALLED HERE BY INJUNCTION". Temporary Court Order Prevents Movie Star from Moving Show.

"A temporary injunction, enjoining the Buck Jones Wild West Shows and Round Up Days from moving off the fairgrounds, where the shows exhibited Friday afternoon and night, was issued late Friday in circuit court by Judge Charles A. Shuey.

"The injunction was served Friday evening by Sheriff M. B. Grimes, who placed about 50 deputy sheriffs on guard at the fairgrounds and during the night.

"The injunction was granted on the request of DeWitt Pilchard, Corporation of California, and it representing the Dell Holding Co. was alleged that the California corporation holds a mortgage for \$15,000 against the show company and that an agreement, entered into between the company and Buck Jones, by which the former was to have direct supervision of the show and to handle the money had been violated.

"On the request of the California company's agent for the appointment of a receiver to take charge of the show property, W. H. Stephens, local real

estate dealer, was appointed. Mr. Stephens, went to the show lot Friday night and took charge of the ticket wagon.

"The bill was filed by the local firm of Graham & Dysert, representing a Springfield law firm, and it is expected that a hearing will be held probably today, the show company having retained the law firm of Hutton & Clark and former Judge Walter Brewer to represent it.

"Previous to the filing of the injunction an attachment demanding \$550.00 was filed in circuit court by the Baker-Lockwood Manufacturing Co. of Kansas City, Mo. This was filed by the law firm of Gunn, Penwell & Lindley. Under this attachment an officer was sent to the show lot and took charge of a large tent, which the Kansas City company alleged it had sold to the Buck Jones Company. It also alleges that Jones has not paid for the tent.

"Two typewritten pages were required to list the property subject to the mortgage, much of which already was incumbered, according to the notations set opposite the various items. In the list is a private sleeping car, advance car, two standard railroad sleeping cars, three standard stock cars and three flat cars, these being subject to an incumbrance of \$22,543.98, in favor of the Warren Tank Car Company. (Note: The show actually got 6 flat cars from Warren and it is not determined here if a typographical error was made in extracting items from the list or that Jones had paid and secured title for three of the flat cars. In all probability Warren's mortgage covered all six flats).

"In his petition for injunction and the appointment of a receiver, Pilchard, the complainant, alleged that the mortgage on the show property was executed on June 17, last, a promissory note for \$15,000 being given by the Jones company. It was agreed, it was said, that the Dell Holding Corp. was to take charge of the business affairs of the show, but that on July 8 at Alton, Odille D. Jones, an officer of the show company, in violation of the agreement, took possession of the ticket wagon and retained the money. It is also alleged that when the show exhibited in Springfield the officers of the show company refused to allow complainant's duly authorized agent, L. L. McBroom, to sell tickets but that Odille D. Jones personally sold the tickets and excluded the agent from the wagon. The money taken in was turned over to the representative of the holding company

and locked up in the car of the company and the next morning when the agent went for the money it was refused him.

"That same day, at Bloomington, it is charged that the complainant was not allowed to have anything to do with selling tickets and that at Springfield Buck Jones, through his agent, Ted Brock, told the complainant that no money would be paid out of the ticket wagon unless Buck Jones was personally present.

"In a room in the St. Nicholas hotel Buck Jones, according to the bill on file, threatened to kill the complainant, DeWitt Pilchard, if he stopped the show and said he would not have anything to do with the agreement and would not pay anything on the note until it became due.

"The show came into Danville from Champaign and was due to exhibit at Crawfordsville, Ind. Saturday."

The July 14, 1929 issue of the Danville Commercial-News contained the following on the status of the tied up Buck Jones show.

"INJUNCTION TO HOLD UP SHOW UNTIL MONDAY."

"A motion to dissolve the temporary injunction, issued late Friday by Judge Charles Shuey, in circuit court, tying up the Buck Jones Wild West Shows and Round Up Days, was made in court Saturday by the law firms of Hutton & Clark and Brewer & Grant, in behalf of Jones.

"It was set down for hearing Monday morning at 9 o'clock and in the meantime the show is tied up in Danville, with deputy sheriffs on guard to see that the terms of the injunction are not violated.

"The question of feeding the 250 men and women with the show and the 75 head of horses and other animals was discussed at length in court and DeWitt Pilchard, of Los Angeles, Calif., representing the Dell Holding Corporation, who filed the injunction, agreed to stand good for the feed bills and meals until the injunction matter is disposed of Monday.

"The hearing was continued until Monday at the request of Attorney Walter Dysert, who stated that Attorney R. Allan Stephens, former attorney of this city, but for a number of years connected with a prominent law firm in

Photo No. 15 - Stagecoach driven by country John Hoffman, Buck Jones Wild West Show, season of 1929. Mr. E. O. Mickel (Montie Montana's father) is man in foreground with chaps on. Montie Montana Collection.



Photo No. 16 - Montie Mickel (Montana) driving the "funny ford" during performance of the Buck Jones Wild West Show, season of 1929. Clown, Ike Lewin, is shown in midair leaving the ford. Montie Montana Collection.



Springfield, was unable to be here for a hearing Saturday.

"Attorney Brewer stated that Mr. Stephens was in Danville Friday night after the injunction had been granted and was also in the city Saturday morning and knew that the case was to be argued Saturday morning. He said that it was after an agreement had been reached between counsel representing the California company and the show that Judge Shuey had been called at his home in Charleston and asked to return to Danville.

"The California company alleged, in filing its bill for an injunction and the appointment of a receiver, that the Jones company had given a mortgage on the show property for \$15,000 for money advanced and that the Dell Holding company had spent a sum far in excess of the amount of the mortgage, some \$26,000. The note was given on June 17, last.

"In its answer to the injunction Jones and his wife made a general denial of all the charges made by Pilchard, the representative of the California company. The note, they declared, was not due until Aug. 1 and their attorneys argued that the company had no legal right to enjoin the show company or try to collect the amount due until the time specified in the note had arrived. It was also held by the show company's attorneys that the bond given when the receiver was appointed was not legal, as the law requires that such a bond must be approved by the court. Instead it was approved by the clerk of the court on the orders of the court.

"It was also represented by Jones' attorneys that the California company had only about one-tenth interest in the show, as their mortgage was only \$15,000, and that they had no right to tie up the other 90 percent of the money invested in the business.

"W. H. Stephens, receiver appointed by Judge Shuey following the granting of the temporary injunction, went to the show lot at the fairgrounds and took charge of the ticket wagon. He was in charge of the show Saturday, under the terms of the receivership and will remain in charge until the receiver has been discharged.

"The question of property owned by private individuals and not listed in the mortgage was discussed at some length Saturday. Mr. Pilchard, who was present in court, said he was willing to have the injunction order modified to allow such property released as could be agreed upon as not being involved, but up to a late hour Saturday no agreement had been reached and all the property, other than a few automobiles and other property owned by individuals with the shows, other than Jones and his wife, was still tied up by the injunction.

"Jones was particularly anxious to get possession of his famous movie horse Silver Eagle (written as a single name but actually two horses) which he claims is

SATURDAY MAY 18

PASO ROBLES

Afternoon

and

Night

America's
Famous
Western
Screen Star

International Tour
WORLD'S
GREATEST
AMUSEMENT
EVENT

BUCK JONES WILD WEST SHOWS AND ROUND-UP DAYS

Appearing in Person Each Performance
Presenting from his

HOLLYWOOD RANCH STUDIO
Cowboys - Indians
Cossacks - Charras - Stunt Riders and
Exponents of Western Ranch Life.
A Wonderful Spectacle of Outstanding Magnitude
Entertaining - Educational

WATCH FOR THE BIG STREET PARADE

This newspaper advertisement was used for the Buck Jones Wild West Show stand at Paso Robles, Calif. May 18, 1929. F. J. Carney Collection.

his own private property, and the four other horses, including a pony belonging to his 11-year old daughter, but he was unable to do so.

"The defense claims that instead of refusing to allow Pilchard to assist in the management of the show they had asked him to help and still insisted that he have a part in the management of the show."

The July 16 edition of the Danville Commercial-News reported the developments of the hearing held that day and it appeared most had been cleared up at last in the following.

"INJUNCTION TO HOLD CIRCUS IN CITY DISSOLVED"

"A temporary injunction, issued out of the circuit court here last Friday afternoon, enjoining the Buck Jones Wild West Shows and Round-Up Days from moving off the lot at the fairground, was ordered dissolved by Judge Charles A. Shuey in circuit court Tuesday morning.

"The judge also ordered discharge of the receiver appointed last Friday and that the shows be turned back to Buck Jones.

"The question of damages was being considered shortly before noon and it was expected that some agreement would be reached soon. Jones' attorneys fixed the damages sustained by their client at \$12,000.

"DeWitt Pilchard, of Los Angeles, Calif. filed the bill for injunction and asked for a receiver for the shows. He set forth in his bill that he had backed the shows to the amount of more than \$25,000, \$15,000 of which was secured by a note against the Dell Holding Corporation of Los Angeles, a Jones corporation. The balance of the money, he claimed, had been spent since the shows went on the road.

"Judge Shuey, in allowing the motion of the defense to dissolve the injunction, stated that he had listened to the evidence and had read the bill through carefully and was of the opinion that there was not sufficient ground for continuing the injunction and therefore would grant the motion to dissolve it.

"A hearing on the amount of damages sustained by the Buck Jones' shows, was to be had in court Tuesday afternoon. Up to a late hour this hearing had not been started.

"The future policy of the company had not been decided upon Tuesday afternoon, but Jones stated that they would continue on the road as soon as the court proceedings here were cleared up.

The July 17 edition of the paper advised that the Buck Jones matter was still not cleared up and that the show not sitting idle for 5 days was not ready to move. The story read as follows:

"CIRCUS DISPUTE IS NOT SETTLED"

"With a temporary injunction dissolved and the receiver discharged, the Buck Jones' shows were still in court Wednesday with every indication that it would require several hours yet to wind up the legal affairs into which the filing of the injunction plunged the company.

"The question of damages sustained by the Buck Jones outfit in tying it up in Danville since last Friday night by a temporary injunction secured by DeWitt Pilchard, of Los Angeles, Calif. was the bone of contention in court Wednesday.

"Attorneys for Jones fixed the damages approximately \$12,000 immediately after the injunction had been dissolved by Judge Charles Shuey, and evidence was still being introduced Wednesday in support of this contention. Several attorneys were called to the witness stand Tuesday afternoon in an effort to fix a reasonable fee for the two legal firms who have represented the Jones shows, Brewer & Grant and Hutton & Clark. Some of these attorneys fixed the fee as high as \$3,000 while others thought the services rendered was worth from \$2,000 and up. The attorneys fees will be taxed as damages against the man who files the suit for injunction.

"The value of the show property, including railroad rolling stock, equipment, horses, wagons, canvas, kitchen equip-

ment and other items was being discussed Wednesday.

"The sheriff's cost in providing deputies to guard the property, which were asked for by the complainant after the injunction was granted, comes to \$347.50, only \$30.00 of which was paid by the receiver from money collected at the Friday evening performance in Danville. The receiver, W. H. Stephens, placed his fee as received at \$250.

The July 18 edition of the paper announced that after almost a week in court the Buck Jones matter appeared settled.

"AGREEMENT IS ARRIVED AT IN CIRCUS ACTION"

"After a hearing before Circuit Judge Charles A. Shuey, which lasted three days, a settlement was reached early Thursday between DeWitt Pilchard, of Los Angeles, and the Buck Jones Wild West Shows and Round-Up Days.

"The terms of the agreement were not made known but Judge Walter Brewer, one of the attorneys representing Buck Jones, stated that it was entirely satisfactory to his client.

"Judge Shuey left for his home in Charleston late Wednesday evening, advising both sides to hold a conference in an effort to arrange an amicable settlement of their differences. He announced that he would be back in Danville Friday and that if an agreement were reached he would be ready at noon that day to hear it.

"It is expected that the suit filed by Pilchard last Friday for specific performance, which was followed by the issuing of a temporary injunction by the court, will be dismissed Friday, providing the terms of the agreement are approved by the court.

"The greater part of Wednesday was taken up in an effort to fix the value of the show property now in Danville, which has been tied up since last Friday by injunction. This valuation was sought for the purpose of fixing damages.

"Both Buck Jones and his wife testified during the afternoon regarding the salaries of various persons with the shows, many of whom were under contract. Others were working under verbal contracts. Jones testified that his salary with the shows was \$1,000 a week. He has been with such shows as the 101 Ranch and Ringling Bros., and participated in a number of rodeos, he said, in addition to working in pictures for 12 years. Mrs. Jones also was with the shows mentioned by her husband.

"The suit in court which tied up the shows was directed against the Buck Jones Wild West Shows and Round-Up Days, Odille D. Jones as president and against Buck Jones and Odille D. Jones as individuals.

"Jones immediately secured counsel and a motion was made the following morning to dissolve the injunction and to discharge the receiver, who had been appointed by the court on the petition of

Pilchard. The motion to dissolve the injunction was granted by the court Tuesday morning and the question of damages, demanded by Jones, was then taken up. Attorneys for Jones first fixed the amount the damages they would demand at \$12,000, which included attorneys' fees and the loss of business during the time the shows were held up.



Photo No. 13 - Buck and Dell Jones in the arena of Buck Jones Wild West Show, North Hollywood, Calif. quarters, May 5, 1929. Montie Montana is in left background. Photo by F. A. Fernekes. (Montie Montana Collection)

"When the hearing on the question of damages was concluded late Wednesday, Attorney Walter Dysert, representing Pilchard, raised the point as to whether the court had the authority to fix damages during court vacation. All of the hearings had been before the court in chambers, the May term of court having been adjourned last week. An hour was given both sides to look up authorities on the point. Before any authorities were presented, however, it was agreed to adjourn the hearing until Friday noon to allow both sides to confer concerning a settlement out of court.

"Pilchard claimed he had financed the Buck Jones Shows and had taken a chattel mortgage, secured by a note for \$15,000, with the understanding that he was to have a share in the running of the shows. He claimed that he was recently not permitted to take any part in the management and therefore filed the suit.

"The defense alleged that the mortgage was not due until Aug. 1 and denied that Pilchard had been excluded from the management of the shows.

"Buck Jones announced that the shows would be rerouted and would again take the road, but would perform in Danville first. The first show was scheduled for this afternoon at 2 o'clock and another will be given tonight at 8 o'clock. Due to

the fact that all the workers have been without pay while the shows were tied up in the court proceedings, Mr. Jones announced that the Danville performances would be for the benefit of the performers, all sharing in the proceeds."

In the meantime the show personnel who had hung around the fairgrounds or train all week were in pretty bad shape, many of them flat broke, and only the cookhouse and a bunk on the train, or flopped out on the lot had kept them going. Two performances were given on Friday, July 19. That evening Buck's horse stumbled and fell with him and he sustained minor injuries.

Although at this time there was a number of behind the scenes maneuvering concerning the fate of the show going on the public was led to believe that after two more performances to be given by the show on Sunday, July 22 the show would resume its tour with first stand scheduled for Indianapolis. The July 21 edition of the local Danville paper ran this story concerning the status of the Jones show and the final performances to be given the next day.

"BUCK JONES PUTS ON SUNDAY SHOW"

"Buck Jones Wild West Shows, tied up in Danville for more than a week by a court injunction, which was dissolved last Tuesday, will give their last performances in Danville today, one show at 2:15 o'clock this afternoon and the other at 8:15 o'clock tonight.

"Due to the disorganization of the routing of the shows because of the week's delay in Danville, it became necessary for the famous screen star to completely reorganize his shows, making the layover of nearly a week necessary.

"While this work was being done Jones has been busy getting some new acts for his shows and building into the show program a number of new sensational features.

"A carload of wild western horses, from the bad lands of Nevada, arrived the latter part of the week, among them being a number of "outlaws". The boys with the Buck Jones shows will attempt to ride them at the performances today. (Note: in all probability this was just a little press agent spice added in)

"With all court proceedings out of the way and a settlement, satisfactory to both sides of the controversy which tied up the shows, arranged out of court. Jones is now getting ready for the road again. His advertising men, contractors, railroad traffic managers and bill posting crews left Danville last night to bill the show and it is expected that the shows will move out just as soon as the advance men are far enough ahead to warrant leaving.

"The western cowboy and showman, anxious to assist the performers and workmen who were thrown out of employment temporarily by the issuing of the injunction, is donating his own services at both performances today, and giving the entire proceeds of the two perfor-

mances as a good will award to his fellow workers who have stood by him.

"Buck Jones has about recovered from the injuries he received when his horse stumbled and fell Friday night and stated last night that he would go through his regular performances at both shows today.

The "settlement" made between Jones and Pilchard was never announced and although Jones now had full control of his show — at least for the next few days until the note became due — he realized it was finished and that he could not keep it going. In the meantime during the past week a number of well known showmen, including Jerry Mugivan of the American Circus Corp., and Fred Buchanan, owner of the Robbins Bros. Circus, were in Danville all of them eyeing the situation and a chance to secure Jones' services in case his show folded completely. Buchanan made a proposition to Jones to take a few of his key performers and join Robbins Bros. Circus for the rest of the season. Buchanan had to leave Danville after a few days but left his nephew Robert Buchanan and his representative, Robert Schiller, in town to try and work out a deal with Jones.

Jones decided to go with Robbins Bros. but the move out of Danville was to be made in secrecy. According to Mrs. Jones, Buck was so fearful that his horses, Silver and company, would be tied up in further litigation and these were necessary if he was to return to motion picture, so that Sunday night after they had been loaded into the stock cars Buck went to the cars, wrapped his horses feet in socks so they would make little noise, and led them out and loaded them on a truck and shipped them out of the state of Illinois to Missouri where subsequently they would be shipped to the Robbins Bros. show. That same night Buck's private car was cut from the rest of the train and hooked onto a passenger train headed for St. Louis. By morning Buck Jones, his family, private car, and horses were enroute to Fremont, Nebraska where they joined Robbins Bros. July 24 which then began billing itself as Robbins Bros. Circus and Buck Jones Wild West.

The next morning it was announced that the show train in Danville would be loaded and sent to Lancaster, Mo. where all would be paid in full and those desiring to join Robbins Bros. would be given an opportunity to do so. Monty Montana said that everyone pitched in to help load the train out for Lancaster. Monty says he and his family remained in Danville, broke, but through the help of their friend, Merl "Jack" Wayne, who lived in Danville and knew Buck Jones, they made their way eastward playing clubs and fairs, then went to New York and Massachusetts, working among other events the Madison Square Garden Rodeo.

The July 22, 1929 edition of the Danville paper told the story of the final hours of the Buck Jones show in the city as follows:



This photo of the rebuilt Buck Jones wagon owned and restored by the Circus World Museum, was taken in Milwaukee on July 3, 1972.

"JONES OUTFIT MERGING WITH ROBBINS SHOW"

"A part of the Buck Jones Wild West Shows, which have been tied up in Danville for a little more than a week, has left the city.

"The private car of the famous screen star was attached to Wabash passenger train No. 3 early Monday morning (July 22), leaving Danville about 3 o'clock for St. Louis, on the way to join the Robbins Bros. Circus, with which the Jones shows will be combined.

"Buck Jones and his wife, together with their daughter, Maxine, were on board the private car, and it was stated that the five horses belonging to Jones, including Silver, his famous screen horse, were also

Photo No. 18 — Buck Jones on the fairgrounds lot at Danville, Ill. where his show was tied up in litigation after its stand on July 12, 1929. Photo by Thurman Frock, Danville, Ill.



sent out of the city during the night.

"The rest of the show was being loaded on the wagons and made ready to leave the city either Monday afternoon or night to join the Robbins circus which is said to be showing somewhere in Nebraska at present.

"Announcement of the consolidation of the Buck Jones shows and the Robbins Bros. Circus, was made Monday morning by Robert Buchanan, representing the latter shows. Mr. Buchanan is a nephew of Fred Buchanan, owner of the Robbins circus, and has been in Danville during the past week. Fred Buchanan also was here for several days, leaving the last of the week to join his shows.

"Buck Jones, according to the announcement, will now become the big attraction with the consolidated shows. Fred Buchanan stated Monday that all the employees of the Jones shows would be taken with them if they cared to go. He expected to leave during Monday to join the circus, leaving Robert Schiller in Danville to have charge of the Buck Jones shows.

"Announcement that Buck Jones had left the city caused some uneasiness at the fairground Sunday night and every deputy sheriff available was rushed to the showgrounds to guard against any trouble. The employees were told, however, that they would all be taken care of and the deputies left about 4 o'clock Monday morning. Another call for the officers of the law was made about 9 o'clock Monday morning, when the work of loading the shows on the wagons started. There was no trouble, however, but the deputies were kept on the grounds for several hours as a safeguard.

"Indians, cowboys, canvas men and others were said to be in an ugly mood Sunday night upon learning their leader had left the city."

The July 23, 1929 edition of the paper carried the final notice of the show as follows:

"JONES CIRCUS QUILTS DANVILLE FOR ST. LOUIS"



Photo No. 17 - Performers of the Buck Jones Wild West Show, Danville, Ill., July 1929. Left to right are Rex Cole, Montie Mickel (Montana), Tony Spano, Johnny Tantlinger, Lovi Calevill, and Slat Jacobs. Stagecoach is in background. Montie Montana Collection.

"With the exception of less than a dozen former employees, the last of the Buck Jones' circus got out of Danville Monday afternoon about 6:15 o'clock. The train, consisting of 15 cars, left Danville over the Wabash railroad. This road was to take the train as far as St. Louis.

"Just where the shows will go from St. Louis was not made known, one story being that at least part of it would go to the winterquarters of the Robbins circus, which has absorbed the Jones shows, and that only a small part of equipment would be taken with the big show.

"Six or eight employees quit the shows at Danville and will go back to California as soon as they can arrange for transportation."

Thus ended the Danville portion of the Buck Jones story. Some of the employees left in Danville found work with Sells-Floto Circus with Tom Mix Himself which made its scheduled appearance in the city a few days later on July 30.

The Jones train was unloaded at the Wm. P. Hall farm in Lancaster, Mo. The rail cars were stored on the sidings where later those mortgaged to Warren Tank Car Co. were repossessed and moved away. Wagons and other properties were scattered about the Hall farm. According to Gordon Jones shortly after the train arrived in Lancaster ten men and some stock went in an express car to join Robbins Bros. in Nebraska. Jones himself went but left soon afterwards at Rapid City, S. D. to join another outfit and later to make the rodeo at Lincoln, Neb.

In the fall of 1929 upon conclusion of the Robbins Bros. season Buck Jones and his family went back to California. He resumed his motion picture work and became more popular than ever in the "talkies" which were now being produced exclusively. He never returned to outdoor showbusiness but remained as

one of America's all time great cowboy movie stars until his tragic death in the Coconut Grove fire in Boston in November 1942.

Monty Montana said his family finally got back to California and they were paid ten percent of the monies due them by the Buck Jones show by the state labor board. Monty, as well as all of the former Jones troupers who were interviewed during research of this article, had nothing but the highest respect for Buck Jones and his family personally. They don't blame the difficulties of the season on him, realizing it was just a matter of circumstances, and these things happen in all types of showbusiness but as the old song goes, "they wouldn't trade it for the world".

Our thanks go again to those who have made this article possible, Joe Rettinger, Merl "Jack" Wayne, Gordon Jones, Monty Montana, Mrs. Maxine Jones Firfires, and especially to Mrs. Dell Jones for her taped interview and many contributions to the article. Mrs. Jones says she regrets a trunk they had with all kinds of Jones photos, cuts, and material was stolen during the tense days at Danville, and other photos she had were lost in recent years. This concludes the Buck Jones story but the editorial staff is always looking for additional photographs of the show which are very scarce.

Epilog

A late communication from Mrs. Buck Jones informs us that the name of the town which is now known as North Hollywood was *Lankershim*, not Lankershire as erroneously reported in part I.

Although the full status of DeWitt Pilchard is still not clarified Mrs. Jones claims he was not an original investor in the show and that Buck personally put up the money to get it organized and moving. Pilchard had indicated he had put more funds into the show other than the \$15,000 loan. In any event Pilchard did hold an important position with the show and according to Mrs. Jones it was Pilchard's poor management in handling the payment of bills by using delays and ruses that got the show into financial difficulty in the first place. She blames



Photo No. 11 - Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Mickel, parents of Montie Montana, during rehearsal of their whip act, Buck Jones Wild West Show, Lankershire (North Hollywood), Calif. May 1929. Montie Montana Collection.

the final demise of the show entirely on him and feels had he not gone into court causing the killing delay at Danville the show could have made it. It appears the show was doing okay after the reorganization in Kansas City and this confirms what Clint Finney said some years ago in effect that the show was doing business until its sudden halt in Danville and consequent folding.

No details of the agreement between Buck Jones and Fred Buchanan have come to life but it seems logical to assume Pilchard was paid off probably by Buchanan who took over the remainder of the show's property not mortgaged to others, hence the show going to the Hall Farm at Lancaster, No. (Buchanan and Hall had very close business association in those days). Had the great depression not come on the land a few weeks after the folding of the Buck Jones show no doubt markets for the equipment would have existed but the depression killed off any chances of this and it remained at the Hall Farm until finally bits and pieces of it were sold to Adkins and Terrell in 1935.

Late word comes from F. J. Carney that he recently checked the Paso Robles, Calif. newspaper files and found out that the Buck Jones show played that city on Sat. May 18, 1929 and sent the following newspaper advertisement which contradicts the speculation in Part I that the show was at Santa Maria on May 18th. Note that the advertisement says to "Watch For The Big Street Parade" which confirms earlier testimony that the Buck Jones show did parade. Unfortunately no photographs of the parade have turned up to show what wagons or other units made the march. Hopefully such photos will be forthcoming in the future. Mr. Carney also located a Buck Jones ad in the San Jose, Calif. paper definitely putting the show there on May 28, 1929.

A NOTE ON THE DECLINE OF THE CIRCUS

By Stuart Thayer

The confraternity of circus historians has recently been offered one of the most important papers ever written on field shows. I refer to Fred D. Pfening III's essay, "The Frontier and the Circus", published in *Bandwagon* in September, 1971. The author applied Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis"¹ to the rise and decline of the circus in America and reached the conclusion that the end of the geographical frontier was the primary reason for that decline.

His argument was strengthened by statements made by showmen at various times to the effect that they were constantly seeking new territory in which to show. They spoke of \$10,000 days in Seattle and Portland and \$200,000 seasons in California as examples of the money to be made in new territories. The implication was that because by 1910 such grosses were no longer attainable the circus had declined. Since these profits were made in new territories and there were no more new territories the golden era ended.

An acceptable thesis, to be sure, but I submit that unless the economic forces that caused the decline are considered part of the frontier's closing then that closing was only incidental to the decline of the circus. I say this because the same forces were at work at the same time with the same effect in many other businesses, some of them, like oil, only remotely part of the frontier.

Whatever the source of our attraction to the history of tented shows we must not overlook the fact that we are studying a business. Whatever glamour, excitement and challenge we find in it as data collectors and showmen, performers and roustabouts found in it as participants the fact remains that it is a business, established for a profit. This would be true if the frontier had never existed and it would be true if the frontier was still expanding.

Pfening quotes James A. Bailey as saying that, "the tent show (has) set up . . . where the war whoops of the savage so lately sounded", which is a fine showmen's statement, but somewhat misleading. The closest the circus could get to the frontier settlement was the moment that the road or canal or railroad was built. Such improvements came only after the settlers had a surplus that needed to be shipped east.

I do not want to leave the impression that I believe that the expanding frontier had no effect on the circus. That would be absurd. As the frontier filled with people the number of circuses increased and so did the number of people employed and so did the prowess they brought to

the art. With the increase in miles of railroad trackage the number of railroad shows increased.

The railroads welcomed the shows. Not only could they make money hauling the circus, but the average small line, there were not many large ones until they began to cross the plains, did a brisk business in excursion fares. As an example, the little Bangor & Piscataquis Railroad brought 1,000 passengers into and out of Bangor, Maine on July 3, 1885 to see the Barnum show. That's 2,000 passenger rides, even at excursion rates more business in a day than the line ordinarily did in three weeks.



This was the golden age (1880-1918), great caravans crossed the country bringing entertainment to a growing population. That was the expansion, but our subject is the decline. At a point the railroad and the circus declined and they declined together and their decline was economic, not geographic. Increases in costs over the ten years 1907 - 1917 had wiped out railroad profits and interfered with their ability to raise capital. They began to consolidate, cut expenses and generally make the time-honored move from control by entrepreneurs to control by bookkeepers.

Railroad circuses interfered with railroad schedules just as small town freight depots and passenger services did. They were unprofitable so they were abandoned (though it took fifty years to convince the ICC it was necessary). The railroad settled for 6%, relatively speaking, and the showman had to do the same thing.

Railroad circuses, faced with higher costs in both movement and equipment, needed more capital to maintain their position. Only wealthy showmen could get it. The 28 week season could not be expanded so it became more and more difficult to get a decent return on investment. Naturally, this led to smaller investment, smaller shows. Truck shows went out by the dozen, playing smaller towns and presumably giving as good a return as the big circuses. But the railroad show was the penultimate circus and its decline was the decline of the whole genre. There were no more \$200,000 seasons in California.

The circus did not decline greatly in numbers. There were 89 shows on the road in 1901² and 81 in 1937³. The difference between these seasons lies in the fact that in 1901 22 shows were on rails and in 1937 only 4. The other 78 circuses in 1937 probably combined did not equal the capital invested, the equipment owned or the program presented of the 22 railers of 1901. It was a decline of style, rather than of number. One could still see the traditional acts, still feed the elephant, still experience a warm day's entertainment under canvas, but it was done much less grandly.

The decline, therefore, was the decline of the great railroad-mounted spectacles and their contraction was a matter of numbers. It was echoed by other businesses, oil, steel, rubber, flour (this last, oddly, was very much parallel to the circus in its history). Consolidation produced US Steel, Standard Oil and Ringling-Barnum.

Henry Ringling North quoted his uncle, John Ringling, as believing that the automobile and the movies had ended the farmer's isolation and that the coming of the circus was no longer the great event of the year⁴. This must be so. A business based on low freight rates, cheap labor and little competition at its intellectual level was forced to change when the railroads lost interest, when the supply is cheap labor dried up and when its audience had more choice of entertainment.

There came a time when highways supplanted railroads and there were no more \$10,000 days in Portland and Seattle.

¹The Significance of the Frontier in American History, paper read before the American Historical Association meeting, 1893.

²Bob Mayer, Bannerline, July 1, 1970

³C. G. Sturtevant, White Tops, March, 1965

⁴The Circus Kings by Henry Ringling North and Alden Hatch (New York, 1960)

FORTY HORSE HITCHES: PAST AND PRESENT

By Fred D. Pfening, III

Circuses usually pulled one or more of their flashiest parade wagons with eight or more horses, not because all this horsepower was necessary but for the same reason that a team of twenty mules was good for the promotion of Borax. A driver who handled a team of eight or more horses was rated a "long string driver." Hitches of from twelve to sixteen on the lead bandwagon in the parade were fairly common, indeed too common to have rated sufficient publicity or photographic coverage for us to now determine precisely just how extensively they were used.

But when the string was extended to forty, that was enough of a sensation even in the horse and buggy days. For that reason a compilation of forty horse hitches, or at least a record of show's that claimed to have one, can be made.

The first record of a forty is on the Spalding and Rogers Circus in 1849. This feature was continued well into the fifties by the show when the famous J. W. Paul had forty pulling the Apollonicon music wagon. The last reference to a forty on Spalding and Rogers is in 1857.

Later in 1857, Paul went to England with the Howes and Cushing Circus, and drove a forty horse hitch on what could well have been the same Apollonicon wagon that had been on Spalding and Rogers. It is assumed that this wagon and fancy hitch were used until the show came back to America in 1864 and became the Great European Circus. By then, however, the big feature of the show were the new tableau wagons, the first ever used in this country, that had been purchased in England.

The Nixon and Kemp Circus also had a forty horse hitch in the 1850's; in fact, during the 1857 season they advertised that two wagons, one the calliope, were drawn by forty horses. The show's advertisements to the contrary, it appears that in 1857 the Nixon and Kemp Circus had only one forty hitch. The 11 July 1857, *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* remarked of the Nixon and Kemp parade: "The driver of the forty horse team — we don't know his name — managed his part of the performance admirably well." Even this seemingly irrefutable evidence is open to question. In 1959, the *Wilmington (Ohio) News Journal* published the re-



Rare picture of a forty horse hitch 106 years ago. Photo taken in Decatur, Ill., in 1866 on the Yankee Robinson Circus. This photo was discovered in the files of

the local newspaper which had saved it because one of the children watching the parade later became a prominent Decatur banker.

collections of one Burritt M. Hiatt, who remembered his disappointment of seeing only eight horses instead of the expected forty on the long string hitch. Perhaps the forty was only used at certain stands.

In 1858, the Nixon and Kemp Circus had the novel feature of a woman, one Madame Mason, driving the forty horse hitch. Aside from the largely irrelevant facts that she was formerly with European circuses and that she reputedly drove a Fielding band chariot in parade, nothing is known of her or the forty hitch that year. Volume seven of Odell's massive history of the New York stage, as well as the *New York Clipper*, noted that Mme. Mason drove a forty hitch on the Nixon & Co. Circus in 1859.

The 12 February 1859, *New York Clipper* stated that Edward Backenston, "the man wot drove forty horses in Broadway," was presented with a whip at the Boston Theatre. This article is significant because it notes that Backenston had been a forty horse driver for James M. Nixon's circus (Nixon and Kemp) the previous four years. This statement in the *Clipper* discloses two important revelations: that the Nixon outfit did indeed have a forty horse hitch, and

This fine drawing of the forty horse hitch pulling the Five Graces bandwagon appeared in the 1897 courier used by the Barnum & Bailey Circus. Pfening Collection.

that it appears almost certain that more than one person drove it. Perhaps there was some truth to the show's claim that they had two forty horse hitches in the same parade.

During the 1860's a number of shows advertised forty horse hitches. When William Lake's Circus played Cincinnati, Ohio, on 2 May 1864, the show said they had forty horses pulling their famous Dolphin Chariot. An ad in the *Clipper* for 9 September 1865, indicates the Yankee Robinson Circus had a forty that year. We know for certain that the Robinson show had a forty horse hitch in 1866 because of the picture taken of the bandwagon and horses in Decatur, Illinois. In 1869 and 1870, the Stone and Murry Circus advertised a forty with J. W. Paul driving. Apparently Paul was the master of his field.

In the 1870's the number of shows advertising a forty horse hitch tapered off. During this decade the Dan Rice Circus, and the Maginley & Co. show, a John V. O'Brien outfit, both advertised the long hitch. J. W. Paul was listed as the driver for the Maginley rig.

The only example of a forty horse hitch during the 1880's was on the John Robinson Circus in 1887. Whether this show's claim to have a "long string" hitch was true or not can not be ascertained, as it can not for many of the earlier forty horse hitches.



WAIT FOR THE CALLIOPE! DRAWN BY 40 HORSES! DRIVEN BY 1 MAN!
Nixon & Kemp's Great Eastern Circus. For One Day Only.
THE GREAT MUSICAL STEAM CALLIOPE COMING!

The only instrument of the kind in existence! Drawn by 40 Horses—four abreast. Two superb CHARIOTS! One for the Steam Apparatus, and the other for the Great Instrument.

WILL EXHIBIT AS FOLLOWS:
AT WILMINGTON, THURSDAY, August 27th.
" KENIA, WEDNESDAY, August 28th.
" WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, August 29th.

ARK method... Such... halation... are... are... and... trial... our... spot... Note... acquir... out... (the... ingredi... The... will be... medicin... fee in... cause... long... off... the... name... fi... tere... wh... at our... Ark...

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Dr. J. C...
the...
Conce...

The Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth

SECTION 1—SHOWING THE GREAT 40 HORSE TEAM AND PONDEROUS TABLEAU BAND WAGON OF THE TWO HEMISPHERES. THIS ONE VEHICLE AND TEAM REPRESENTING AN OUTLAY OF OVER \$50,000.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST GRANDEST, BEST AMUSEMENT INSTITUTION

In 1857 the Nixon and Kemp Circus advertised that their calliope was drawn by forty horses: on some occasions, however, only eight horses were used to pull the wagon. From the 20 August 1857, *Clinton Republican* of Wilmington, Ohio. Fred Dahlinger collection.

The next known use of the forty horse team was during the European tour of the Barnum and Bailey Greatest Show on Earth. Jim Thomas was the first driver, but after he was discovered by James A. Bailey to be drinking too much, the job was turned over to Jake Posey. In his memoirs, Posey remembered what it was like to drive a long hitch:

In parade I had three men with me. One man was behind to keep the slack in the lines straight in turning a corner. I would take up twenty feet of slack; then when the teams straightened out, the slack would run through my fingers. If there should be a twist in a line, it would throw them all out of my hand. Another man worked the wheel brake, and a third worked the ground, in case something went wrong.

While in Europe the Barnum show used

the famous Five Graces band wagon for the forty, but when the show returned to America in 1903, the long hitch was used on the new Twin Hemispheres band wagon. The year 1904 was the last time a forty horse hitch was used in a circus parade until 1972.

In 1937, however, a forty-four horse hitch was attempted on Howard Y. Bary's Hagenbeck Wallace Circus. In relating the story, Jake Posey, then boss hostler of the Hagenbeck show, said that Bary was quite interested in reviewing the forty horse hitch tradition. Enough leather was gathered up and put together, but when the reins were pulled, they fell apart. Thus ended what would have been the first forty-four horse hitch in circus history.

Circus historians of this generation have long dreamed of seeing a forty horse hitch in parade, but until Dick Sparrow was given the chance to drive the Columbia bandwagon in this year's Schlitz Old Milwaukee Days parade, it

Excellent view of Dick Sparrow abroad the Columbia on 4 July 1972 in Milwaukee. This picture was taken by Albert Conover, official CHS photographer at Milwaukee.

In 1903 and 1904 the Twin or Two Hemisphere wagon was pulled by forty horses on the Barnum and Bailey Circus. Because most of the good pictures of this particular hitch have been published in recent months, it was decided by the *Bandwagon* staff to publish this rare lithograph instead. P. M. McClintock collection.

looked as if the only way to recreate the experience was by looking at the hand-full of pictures of forty horse hitches. All members of the historical fraternity owe a debt of gratitude to Schlitz, Dick Sparrow and especially Chappie Fox for their part in bringing back one of the greatest features ever seen on a circus lot. It was indeed marvelous — thank you gentlemen for giving us something to remember.

When one writes on a subject that he knows very little about, he owes a great debt to his friends. I would like to thank Fred Dahlinger for supplying me with his notes on forty horse hitches, and Albert Conover for use of his father's notes on the same subject. Their notes were indispensable.



Medicine Show Tonight!

By Art Doc Miller

Over the years there have been shows other than circuses that have been associated with circus people. Minstrel, Uncle Tom and Medicine show fell into this category. Often the owners of these other types of shows would be circus operators working in the off season, in many cases the performers would be circus people between circus jobs.

With the publication of this article we are bending our editorial policy a bit, but we could not resist using this interesting bit of nostalgia.

Should there be reader interest in Medicine Shows we may run a most interesting, condensation of unpublished book on the subject, written by the late Harve Poe. - Editor

Until the early twenties, hardly anything brought more excitement to a village than the arrival of a medicine show. Many a circus trouper, stranded when a show folded, finished the season on a 'med' show, in fact most of these shows liked to feature circus acts, along with black face, musical numbers and vaudeville turns.

The flashier med shows had elaborately decorated vans pulled by teams sporting polished, brass-trimmed harness. Sometimes they carried the circus theme a bit further by having tassels or feather plumes on the team bridles. Upon arriving at the edge of a community, bells were added to the harness which jingled in a pleasing manner and aroused the attention of everyone.

A recessed seat, roof protected, enabled the Doc to ride in regal glory, wearing a stove pipe hat, cut-away coat, fashionable trousers and a diamond studded necktie while across his vest would be a heavy gold watch chain. Beside him rode the two or three performers.

Pulling to a halt at the post office, Doc would alight, enter and inquire for mail, naming off far more names than he ever carried on the show. This always made a big impression on the crowd of villagers who had suddenly appeared on the scene.

Noting the town Squire, Doc would palm him a duece and be all set to park the wagon near or on the village square. Once located the team was unhitched and preparations made for the evening performance.

The typical med show wagon was a good sized affair, built so the rear end let down to form part of the stage. Extensions from same unfolded to double the stage width. Uprights made from 2x4's were hinge-pinned into place, sky boards added and a curtain hung across the back and along each side. Hung to both front uprights were the showmens' old standby, - gasoline flare torches. These resembled two large pie pans face to face which formed the gas tank. Running down about three feet was a tiny pipe with an

Chief Half Moon is shown giving a "scalp" treatment to a customer on the Chief's Medicine Show around 1910. The poster hanging next to the seated man's hand is the Col. Edwards poster reproduced with this article. Pfening Collection.

elbow at the bottom which continued outward a few inches to a shut off valve and then a few inches further to the burner. These torches gave off a hissing noise, smoked, flickered, but far surpassed ordinary oil lanterns. Although dangerous, they rarely exploded and were a familiar sight on all shows.

On one side of the wagon a door would be located which was reached by box car style iron steps. Inside, the wagon resembled a cozy consultation office room containing a desk, dresser, bunk and a chair or two. Daytimes certain men would seek out Doc for special treatment which they swore they had caught in the town's tavern outhouse . . . If entrance could be made in a discreet fashion, some town girls would sneak into the office for real or imaginary ailments or to carry on a flirtation with the handsome Doc. The rear section of the wagon was partitioned off and contained a bunk or two and the show's stock of candy and medicine.

I slept on the driver's seat, having joined in a hurry from an Erie freight after outrunning my father and his ever handy razor strap. Cleo and Jeff were Doc's whole show. They were all-around troupers, had trouped on Sun Bros., Downie and Wheeler, in vaudeville, repertoire and many "Tom" shows. Cleo was very attractive, thought well along in years while Jeff was a typical alcoholic; yet he could go through his routines and never miff a line even when looped to the ears. Between them they could change nightly their entire skits, presenting worthwhile entertainment.

Allowing time for the villagers to eat supper, we would start to draw a crowd by my beating on a bass drum, while Cleo would vigorously shake a set of Deacon hand bells, for simple tunes.

After we had drawn a fair sized audience, Jeff would do a juggling number with me following with a mechanical accordion which played with rolls same as a player piano. The crowd was then large enough to make Doc's first pitch, always a 10¢ soap item to loosen the purse strings. Ordinary soap is pressed into hard cakes and is rather heavy; Med soap was whipped, then formed into shape but remained light as a feather.

To demonstrate the item, Doc would go into detail how 'store bought' soap was made from animal fat, often from sick and diseased cows and horses, the use of which could cause deadly infections which could spread throughout the blood stream. He would then continue to tell how his soap was made from pure desert vegetable plants and to prove how pure it was, he would drop a cake into a glass of water and drink every drop. As most everyone in the audience, when a kid,



had been subjected to a mouth washing with soap, this convinced the onlookers that Doc really has a worthwhile product. But Doc was not through with his spiel, he wanted 100% sales, so dipped a shaving brush into a pan of water, rubbed it across the soap and immediately, an amazing amount of suds grew and grew to the size of a large musk melon. What the audience did not know was the fact that Doc had previously inserted a liberal amount of shaving cream into the brush, which made the suds and not the cake of soap.

At this moment, Doc would announce that for advertising purposes, he would send his salesmen out into the audience to sell just fifty bars of soap far below cost - a mere ten cents. When the fifty cakes were sold, there would be no more available at any price. Jeff and I would then take our sales boxes, loaded with about 200 bars of soap, and rush into the crowd shouting 'Who's next, How Many!! Sold Again Doctor!!' When Doc figured we had saturated the tip with soap, he'd call us in saying "Thank you fifty people who have purchased the greatest soap value in history."

The show would continue for ten minutes or so then Doc would come out and make a pitch on the grave dangers of foot corns. 'If they continue, said Doc, the roots will grow at an alarming rate through the foot and up one's leg to eventually reach and stop the heart' 'Yes!', continued Doc, 'every day, people, - some of them rather young are laid to rest, - God bless them, - from heart attacks,' - 'But it is a known fact in medical schools, that many deaths are not caused from so called weak hearts, but from the heart actually being strangled by the roots of a common corn.' In those days many people sent away for mail order shoes which ran irregular in size and usually did cause corns. After listening to Doc's horrifying description, they could hardly wait for us to walk through the crowd offering, this wonderful 25¢ salve which would save them from such a terrible death.

The show would continue until Doc felt the tip was ready to part with a little more hard earned coin. I consider this next scheme the greatest I've ever known and never duplicated on any other show that I ever heard about. One of the front wagon wheels and axle had never known

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Price, 50c. per Bottle.

a speck of axle grease. Instead it revolved on tar soap, which of course to those not in the know, sure looked like regular axle grease. When making the pitch on his amazing stain remover, made from a rare plant found only in the Amazon

This advertising poster for Col. T. A. Edwards Indian Medicines is lithographed in full color and contains some very fine paintings of Indians. The various products listed in the article were available to showmen from the Edwards factory in Corry, Penna. Pfening Collection.

jungle, Doc would pause to borrow a white handkerchief from some one in the audience. Upon receiving it, he would instruct me to daub some axle grease on it from 'that there wagon hub', then holding it up in plain view, he would rub a cube of his famous stain remover across

The Kickapoo Sagwa medicine show was a well known one in the east. It traveled in this single railroad car, being framed like many one and two car circuses and minstrel shows. Photo taken in 1910. Pfening Collection.





Here is the Kikapoo show on the lot in 1910. Chief Hiawatha is standing under the marquee. Pfening Collection.

the dirtiest portion, dip it in a pan of water, swish it around a bit, rub it briskly and hold it up in view with every inch of it again pure white. Housewives, especially, went hog-wild to buy up quantities of this 25¢ item which happened to be nothing but sawed pieces of regular perfumed soap. Naturally, we never sold this item until the last night in town.

Other regular items were snake oil, made from turpentine, red pepper and gasoline, tooth ache drops, a blend of ether and powdered cloves and the main seller, Doc's famous Indian Tonic. It was made from roots, barks and herbs, so he told folks, but actually it cost about 15¢ to bottle and was composed of a strong licorice powder, bitter roots, as everyone just knew medicine had to taste terrible to be effective, a good percentage of alcohol and the balance of the bottle filled with water from any convenient horse-watering trough. If the lecture on the corn dangers had startled folks, his pitch on the tonic really had them terrified. It would correct the cause of facial pimples, make old men throw away their crutches and have young ideas, to say nothing of curing T.B., arthritis, kidney ailments, correct all female troubles,

build strong bodies and pure blood to ward off all fatal diseases. The tonic went like hot cakes, one dollar a bottle or six for five follars. After a few swigs, stand-offish wives often became intoxicated and very amorous.

Following the sale of this marvelous insurance against all ailments, Cleo and Jeff would put on a short sweetheart comedy routine prior to the famous candy pitch. Now forbid by law, in the old days it helped move many a show. The flashy oversize boxes contained about eight pieces of almost unchewable candy along with prizes of some sort. Each case of 250 boxes, costing \$12.50 would include 20 ballys or worthwhile major prizes. The balance were pure slum junk. The ballys usually consisted of ladies rayon stockings, imitation silk Teddys, or chemises, safety razors, ladies scarves, and so forth. Cleo schooled me on how to make a killing on candy and often I would sell a full case to far less than half that many towners. The first few buyers always got carefully planted ballys and as soon as they opened their box, we would practically grab it out of their hands, hold it up high and cry out. "Hey look what the lucky man got, - a genuine camera!" and "Over here a gold \$5.00 safety razor" (it likely cost the candy firm about 10¢). As long as they fought

The medicine show's did not parade, but they did use downtown bally wagons, like this one used in 1910 on the Kikapoo show. All of the illustrations used with this article were originally from the Harve Poe Collection.

to buy the boxes we didn't throw out any more ballys; when sales slipped a bit, out would go another two or three and the demand immediately increased to a frenzy. When sold out it concluded our show for the evening and Doc would announce an all new show the following evening.

Med shows never seriously hurt anyone, - true the products were more or less worthless but everyone did see an evening of entertainment even if they failed to spend a cent.

My show world education was soon curtailed by the arrival of a sheriff and my father who returned me back home to hoe spuds, paint tin roofs and attend that most horrible place, - school.

The last medicine show to tour was the Bardex Minstrels, long owned and operated by Dr. Milton Bartok, of recent circus fame. This view shows the Bardex show on the Jeannette, Penna. lot in 1944. Pfening Collection.



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WOMEN'S LIB HITS MILWAUKEE PARADE

This year the big event of the Schiltz-Circus World Museum Old Milwaukee Days parade was the recreation of the 40 horse hitch, first time since 1904, driven by Dick Sparrow, but another little behind the scenes activity was also going on and very little notice was given to this event. It should be noted for the record.

The event, which we call the Women's Liberation Movement, was present with the participation of women in the loading of the Circus World Museum train in Baraboo and Milwaukee. The cast of people involved Ms. Jeanna Jackson and Ms. Ruth Kollert, both of Wooster, Ohio, and brought to the July 4th activities by Lloyd Gentis also of Wooster and a long time team driver in the parade.

These two teenagers performed their tasks along with other members of the train crew, that of handling one of the teams of horses pulling wagons along the flats after loading.

Jeanna, a three year veteran is at the reigns of the team, while Ruth, a first-of-may, is shown hooking a wagon. Although these young ladies did take a lot of kidding, they did a good job. Photo and text by Albert Conover, official CHS parade photographer.

Bill Woodcock's Circus Letterheads



This letterhead used by the Downie & Wheeler Shows from 1911 to 1913 was printed by the Donaldson Litho Co. The D & W are red and rest of names are in gold, the rest is in black. Andrew Downie is at left and Al F. Wheeler at right.

